

A new Ballad, shewing the great misery sustained by a poore man in Essex, his Wife
and Children: with other strange things done by the Devill.
To the tune of, The rich Merchant man.



A poore Essex man
that was in great distresse,
Most bitterly made his complaint,
in griefe and heavinesse:
Through scarcitie and want,
he was oppressed sore,
He could not find his children bread,
he was so extreme poore.

His silly wife God wot,
being lately brought to bed,
With her poore infants at her brest
had neither drinke nor bread.
A wofull lying in
was this, the Lord doth know,
God keep all honest vertuous wives
from feeling of such woe.

Oh Husband deare, she said,
for want of food I die,
Some succour doe for me provide,
to ease my misery.
The man with many a teare,
most pittiously replyde,
We have no means to buy us bread;
with that the children cry'd.

They came about him round,
upon his coat they hung:
And pittiously they made their mone
their little hands they wring.
Be still my boyes, said he,
and Ie goe to the wood,
And bring some Acornes for to roast,
and you shall have some food.

Forth went the wofull man,
a Cord he took with him,
Wherewith to bind the broken twine
that he should homewards bring:
And by the way as he went,
met Farmers two or thre,
Desiring them for Christ his sake,
to helpe his misery.

Oh lend to me (he said)
one loafe of Barley bread,
One pint of milke for my poore wife
in Child-bed almost dead:
Thinke on my extreme need,
to lend me have no doubt,
I have no money for to pay,
but I will worke it out.

But they in churlish sort,
did one by one reply,
We have already lent you more
than we can come well by.
This answer strooke his heart
as cold as any stone:
Unto the wood from thence he went,
with many a grievous groane.

Where at the length (behold)
a tall man did him meet, (all
And cole-black were his garments
from head unto his feet.
Thou wretched man (said he)
why dost thou weep so sore? (mone
What is the cause thou mak'st this
tell me and sigh no more.

Alas, good Sir (he said)
the lack of some reliefe,
For my poore wife & children small,
his cause of all my griefe:
They lie all like to starve
for want of bread (saith he)
Good Sir, boughsafe thereto to give
one peny unto me.

Whereby this wretched man
committed wondrous evill,
He begged an almes and did not know
he asht it of the Devill:
But straight the hellish fiend,
to him reply'd againe,
An odious sinner art thou then,
that dost such want sustaine.

Black (the poore man said)
this thing for truth I know,
That Iob was just, yet never man
endured greater woe.
The godly oft doe want,
and need doth pinch them sore,
Yet God will not forsake them quite
but doth their states restore.

If thou so faithfull be,
why goest thou begging then?
Thou shalt be fed as Daniel was,
within the Lyons Den,
If thus thou doe abide,
the Ravens shall bring thee food,
As they unto Elias did,
that wandered in the wood.

Woeke not a wofull man,
good Sir, the poore man said,
Redouble not my sorowes so,
that are upon me laid:
But rather doe extend
unto my need, and give
One penny for to buy some bread,
my children poore may live.

With that he opened straight,
the fairest purse in sight,
That ever mortall eye beheld,
filld up with crownes full bright,
Unto the wofull man
the same he wholly gave,
Who very earnestly did pray,
that Christ his life might save.

Well (quoth the damned spirit)
goe ease thy childrens sorow,
And if thou wantest any thing,
com meet me here to morrow:
Then home the poore man went,
with cherefull heart and min,
And comforted his wofull wife
with wordes that were most kin.

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The second part, To the same tune.



The comfort Wife he said,
I have a purse of Gold
Given by a Gentleman,
most faire for to behold.
And thinking for to pull
his purse from bosome out,
He found nothing but When leaves,
bound in a filthy clout.

Which when he did behold,
with sorrow pale and wan,
In desperate sort to seeke the purse,
unto the Wood he ran,
Supposing in his mind,
that he had lost it there:
He could not tell then what to think,
he was 'twixt hope and feare.

He had no sooner come
into the shady Grobe,
The Devil met with him againe,
as he in fancy strobe:
What seekst thou here he said:
the purse (quoth he) you gave:
Thus fortune she hath crossed me,
and then the Devil said,

Where didst thou put the purse?
tell me, and doe not lye,
Within my bosome said the man,
where no man did come nigh.
Looke there againe (quoth he)
then said the man I shall,
And found his bosome full of Loads,
as thicke as they could craivle.

The poore man at this sight,
to speake had not the power,

Soe (quoth the Devil) vengeance both
pursue this every houre:
Goe cursed wretch (quoth he)
and rid away thy life,
But murder first thy children young,
and miserable Wife.

The poore man raging mad,
ran home incontinent,
Intending for to kill them all,
but God did him prevent.
For why the chiefeest man,
that in the Parish dwelt,
With meat and money thither came,
which liberally he dealt.

Who seeing the poore man
come home in such a rage,
Was faine to bind him in his bed,
his fury to allmage:
Where long he lay full sicke,
still crying for his Gold,
But being well, this whole discourse
he to his neighbours told.

From all temptations,
Lord blesse both great and small:
And let no man, O heavenly God,
for want of succour fall:
But put their speciall trust
in God for evermore,
Who will no doubt from misery,
each faithfull man restore.

FINIS.

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